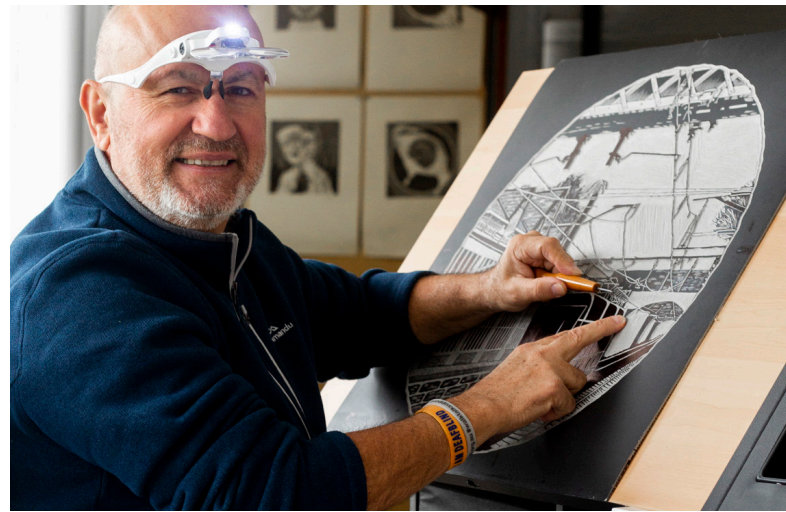


FRIENDS OF ABLE

Spring 2021



JOE'S PASSION FOR PRINTMAKING

Joe didn't know what to expect when he was invited to take part in Able Art many years ago, Able Australia's creative arts therapy program, but it's changed his life.

Every year, Able Art gives people like Joe a chance to express themselves and develop their abilities.

Joe is deafblind with low vision and communicates using Auslan. His skills and appreciation of art grew slowly over

time, inspired by his love of nature and bushwalking.

"The art therapy program at Able is hugely important to the people who access it, as it provides an outlet for the challenges that people with a disability face on a daily basis" writes Joe.

Joe is now a professional artist whose work can be seen at private galleries in Melbourne and Able Art exhibitions.

SUPPORTING OUR CLIENTS DURING COVID-19



Our National Head of Behaviour Support and Allied Health, Clare Humphries, loves to help her clients to engage with others. This is even more important during COVID-19, where the opportunity for clients to socialise is reduced.

To overcome this challenge, Clare recently hosted an online dance class. The class saw lots of fun dance moves and dancewear, and everyone had a great time together.

TOGETHER WE ARE ABLE



THE ART OF THERAPY

- BY CLAIRE FRASER

As an Art Therapist at Able Australia, my work is based on the belief that art-making in a therapeutic context can support a person with disability to make changes in their inner world, supporting them to develop a more integrated sense of self.

I've worked in the disability field with people who face communication barriers for over a decade. I was most interested in and passionate about creating relationships and opportunities that supported people to express themselves and improve emotional wellbeing.

People come to art therapy for many reasons. Some examples are: support with a specific mental health concern, to develop new skills or to improve how they understand and manage emotions.

I love the client-centred nature of the work, and how much art materials can offer people in terms of control, sensory input, play and the opportunity to experiment.

Some of the benefits include experiencing a sense of safety, feeling empowered through choice of materials, and feeling a sense of connection to self and to others.

There is a misconception that you need to be 'good' or 'skilled' at art to try art therapy - however this isn't the case, art therapy is for everyone!

"Art therapy allows space for play, creativity, imagination and trying new things. It feels quite magic! What three words sum up art therapy? Expansive, possibility and empowerment."

NOELA FINDS JOY



The structure of Able Art is perfect for Noela, who is deafblind and uses deafblind fingerspelling and Auslan to communicate. Noela loves creating objects with wood, especially animals.

Noela says, "I have lots of puzzles I have made. I can't see, but I can feel everything. Making wood animals makes me feel happy and I like showing people."

FOOD SERVICES TO SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITY

Over the past few months, COVID-19 has caused a doubling of demand for our Meals-on-Wheels program in Queensland, with many clients fearful of putting themselves at risk by moving about in the community.

Based at the Jimboomba Community Centre, Able Australia's community pantry and meal service supports people in financial distress; those experiencing homelessness, seniors, and people with disability.

“Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, we have increased our meal provision from 500 to over 900 meals a month to meet demand,” said Edmund McMahon, Community Transport Manager.



THANK YOU #TEAMABLE

With lockdowns of one form or another across much of Australia, it has been tough for clients and staff to adapt to COVID-safe practices. To protect our clients in lockdown areas, our staff wear facemasks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In Victoria, our staff passed a tough milestone; for over 365 days, our Victorian team have had to wear PPE at all times within our homes, day and other services.

In order to thank our staff for their tireless work and commitment to our clients, we reached out to our networks and shared their story. Many were equally touched by their selflessness. In recognition of the amazing work our staff do, \$30,000 of product was donated to go into care packs created for our team.

During September, we parcelled up 98 boxes of goodies created for our team and distributed them to staff as part of R U OK Day, as a special thank you and opportunity to check in on staff wellbeing.



In ACT, our client Leanne took great pride in handing out care packs personally to staff, and loved the opportunity to show her appreciation. We are proud of the work our teams have been doing to support our clients in these challenging times.

Thank you to our supporters: Bioderma, Carmex, Dermal Therapy, Hesta, Kobayashi Healthcare, Natures Organics, Sukin, Twinings, Six Degrees Executive and We Are Savvy.

LORETTA'S LOVING LIFE

Meet Loretta, a regular at Able Australia's Northcote Day Centre. Loretta loves shopping, art therapy, walks, movies and the staff who support her to access activities and social opportunities at the centre and within the community.

She's currently completing writing and art courses. Recently, Loretta baked a delicious chocolate cake as a gift for her residential carer.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our recent fundraising appeal raised \$252,674 which will fund the training of eighty of our support workers in Auslan over the next three years. This is an important skill as many of our clients use Auslan to communicate. We are so thankful for our generous supporters.

If you would like to support our work, please donate by using the QR code provided at the bottom of this page.

NEW HOMES TO OPEN SOON

With the help of our supporters, we raised \$600,000 in 2019 and 2020 to support the commencement of building two single-unit homes for our clients.

We expect that the homes in Moorabbin, Victoria, will officially open late 2021 or early 2022, following delays due to COVID-19.



THANK YOU

Much of our work is funded through kind donations and gifts in wills. If you would like to donate, please use this QR code or visit <http://ableaustralia.org.au/donate>.



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